

Congressman Ron Paul U.S. House of Representatives July 24, 2002

The Tragedy of Partial-Birth Abortion

Mr. Speaker, like many Americans, I am greatly concerned about abortion. Abortion on demand is no doubt the most serious social-political problem of our age. The lack of respect for life that permits abortion significantly contributes to our violent culture and our careless attitude toward liberty.

Whether a civilized society treats human life with dignity or contempt determines the outcome of that civilization. Reaffirming the importance of the sanctity of life is crucial for the continuation of a civilized society. There is already strong evidence that we are indeed on the slippery slope toward euthanasia and human experimentation. Although the real problem lies within the hearts and minds of the people, the legal problems of protecting life stem from the ill-advised Roe v. Wade ruling, a ruling that constitutionally should never have occurred.

The best solution, of course, is not now available to us. That would be a Supreme Court that recognizes that for all criminal laws, the several states retain jurisdiction. Something that Congress can do is remove the issue from the jurisdiction of the lower federal courts, so that states can deal with the problems surrounding abortion, thus helping to reverse some of the impact of Roe v. Wade.

Unfortunately, H.R. 4965 takes a different approach, one that is not only constitutionally flawed, but flawed in principle, as well. Though I *will* vote to ban the horrible partial-birth abortion procedure, I fear that the language and reasoning used in this bill do not further the pro-life cause, but rather cement fallacious principles into both our culture and legal system.

For example, 14G in the "Findings" section of this bill states, "...such a prohibition [upon the partial-birth abortion procedure] will draw a bright line that clearly distinguishes abortion and infanticide..." The question I wish to pose in response is this: Is not the fact that life begins at conception the main tenet of the pro-life community? By stating that we are drawing a "bright line" between abortion and infanticide, I fear that we are simply reinforcing the dangerous idea

underlying Roe v. Wade, which is the belief that we as human beings can determine which members of the human family are "expendable," and which are not.

The belief that we as a society can decide which persons are "expendable," leads us directly down a slippery slope of violence and apathy toward humanity. Though many decry such ethicists as Peter Singer of Princeton, who advocates the "right" of parents to choose infanticide, as well as euthanasia, his reasoning is simply a logical extension of the ethic underlying Roe v. Wade, which is that if certain people are not "useful" or "convenient," they should be done away with.

H.R. 4965 also depends heavily upon a "distinction" made by the Court in both Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey, which established that a child within the womb is not protected under law, but one outside of the womb is. By depending upon this false and illogical "distinction," I fear that H.R. 4965, as I stated before, ingrains the principles of Roe v. Wade into our justice system, rather than refutes them as it should.

Despite its severe flaws, this bill nonetheless has the possibility of saving innocent human life, and should therefore be supported. I fear, though, that when the pro-life community uses the arguments of the opposing side to advance its agenda, it does more harm than good.

I wish to conclude with a quote from Mother Theresa, who gave a beautiful and powerful speech about abortion on February 3, 1994, at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC: "...From here, a sign of care for the weakest of the weak- the unborn child- must go out to the world. If you (in the United States) become a burning light of justice and peace in the world, then really you will be true to what the founders of this country stood for..."

May we see bills in the future that stay true to the solid principles the founders of this country stood for, rather than waver and compromise these principles.